

DOES CHRIST MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?

What does it matter if world mission in the 21st century moves toward ^{the ground theme of} building inter-faith relationships rather than the narrow-minded goal of 19th and 20th century missions to lead people to a trusting faith in Jesus Christ? Does the vast sea of unbelievers in the world want to turn to Christ? Why should they? What difference does it make? Aren't there other satisfying religions available? It won't surprise you to hear that I think it does matter; and that it makes a great deal of difference.

One reason I know it makes a difference is that I have lived in a time and place where the difference that Christ makes became sharply clear, not in individual lives alone but in a whole nation's life and culture. In the west we've had Christian believers for at least 1800 years, but most of the difference begins on the inside where you can't always see the distinctive contrast clearly at first. The real difference was made hundreds of years ago. But can you imagine a country where there were no Christians, where Christ was not known, and then the first ones began to turn to him? If you could watch the change - the revolution, really, that begins to ripple through a whole nation when the first handful of people really see Jesus Christ, you would no longer ask, "What difference does it make?"

I was born in Korea where Christians have only been above ground and not in hiding for a little over 125 years. Some of them are in hiding again in North Korea. My father was there almost at the very beginning. I've seen the difference. I think it is best described by a short verse in I John, chapter four, verse 18: "Perfect love casts out fear." That puts it too simply, perhaps, but the difference is the difference between love and fear, living in love, and living in fear.

Don't think of it in terms of civilizing the savages. You know the old caricature of the Christian making converts: the missionary in a black suit, pith helmet, beating through the jungle with an umbrella in one hand to keep off lions, and a Bible in the other to convert cannibals. But turning to Christ isn't a savage becoming civilized. The Koreans weren't savages. In fact, to them, it was the westerners who were the savages. Back when some of your ancestors and mine were running off to battle clothed in nothing but blue paint the Koreans were moving through stately court rituals to the music of jade flutes and dressed in silks and satins. No, the story of the coming of Christ to Korea, and Koreans coming to Christ, is not a story of the difference between savagery and civilization, but between love and fear.

Just how much fear there was in Korea only the first missionaries really knew, those who walked where Christ had never been known. Korea had its so-called higher religions, Buddhism and Confucianism, but the real religion of the people was a fear of the spirit world. They saw evil spirits in every dark corner, in the rocks and trees and hovering on the roof-tops ready to cause disease and maim and cripple. Evil spirits bring floods and fire and financial and physical ruin.

In such a situation, what a difference Christ makes. Missionaries like my father in those early days of spiritual darkness, simply said "I know about your spirits, but I am not afraid of them because I know the Great Spirit: 'God is a Spirit'. You don't have to be afraid, because the Great Spirit loves you." "God is love. And you can know that He loves you because He sent his

Son as a living sacrifice for you. Not just for me and my people, but also for you." God didn't send his Son to New York or London. His Son was born in Asia; and he loves the whole world. He died to save it.

Now, if that sounds like too simple a gospel, how do you explain the difference it makes? How do you explain the revolution it made in the lives of the Korean people who first heard it and believed it and turned to Christ? In the countryside Korean mothers used to give their babies ugly names like Little Squint-Eye and Little Wart on the Nose - not because they thought their babies were ugly, but because they loved them and were afraid. They wanted to protect them from the evil spirits. What spirit would harm Little Squint-Eye when there might be a beautiful baby to cripple and destroy! But when that mother became a Christian, when she turned to Christ, one of the first things she would do would be to change the name of her baby. Little Squint-Eye would become Little White Cloud, or Little Jewel, because beautiful babies deserve beautiful names. Did it make a difference? It made all the difference in the world in that home, because perfect love casts out fear.

Of course that old traditional Korea I have been describing is gone today. Korea has changed radically since the days of the pioneers. I lived as a missionary, myself, in a very modern Korea, and a very sophisticated city of seven or eight million people, now grown even larger with skyscrapers, subway networks, fast-moving autos and air-pollution. But you know, there is still the same need for the transforming difference that comes when men and women turn to Christ.

Korea has changed very dramatically, but God's love never changes, and His love as revealed in Jesus Christ makes all the difference. It is not our love for Him, which is sometimes very weak. Not those Korean mothers' love for their babies. That still left them afraid - afraid that the spirits would take their babies away. No, John, in this same letter in the Bible, makes very clear what kind of love it is that takes away fear. "The love I speak of," he says, "is not our love for God, but the love He showed to us in sending His Son as the remedy...for our sins." (1 John 4:10).

When the world changes, God's love is still at work. One of the first changes in Korea when old traditional Korea began to change, was that fear of the spirits lessened, but another fear took its place. The Japanese came and conquered the land, and fear of the conquerors was just as bad as fear of the spirits. But not all Koreans were afraid. Some, particularly in the Christian church, had discovered the secret that casts out fear. God loves us, and if God be for us, who can be against us? In 1919 when Korea's bravest leaders found the courage to sign a Korean Declaration of Independence (independence from Japan), only 3% of the Korean people were then Christian, but of the men who were willing to sign their names to that declaration at risk of their lives, 50% were Christian. The Christians were not afraid. Perfect love casts out fear. It does more than free from fear, it frees for witness and service and all the things that Christians can do to make this a better world. It makes that kind of difference.

But the world changed again in Korea. The Japanese are gone. But Korea has been cut in two, leaving a new terror in the north, a cult-like communist government. South Korea is independent again, though, and amazingly modern. I wish I could say that now there is no more

fear in South Korea. But in the city of Seoul where I lived, people are still afraid. They tell us that those who live there are within two and a half seconds of complete annihilation. It is only 30 miles from the communist lines at the 38th parallel. There are again hundreds of thousands of Koreans who are afraid - afraid of the new terror, an adversarial neighbor with nuclear arms.. But not all. Some have faced even this terror and found, as always, that perfect love casts out fear.

The best example of the confrontation between Christianity and communism as it ought to be I found in the life of a mild Korean pastor, Pastor Sōn. His greatest joys in life were his two sons. The oldest was president of the High School Christian association in the village where his father preached. One day before the great invasion of 1950, a communist guerilla band seized the village. Its leader was a 19-year-old terrorist. They made their center of operations on the school campus. Quickly they rounded up the school leaders. They took Pastor Sōn's older son to the edge of the athletic field, beat him and demanded he give up his Christian faith. "Do it, or I'll shoot you," said the 19-year-old communist. His younger brother rushed forward. "Don't shoot him, shoot me! He's the oldest son!" And the young terrorist shot them both. Two days later the insurrection collapsed. The Chief of the town's police came to the pastor. "You'll be glad to know we've captured the man who murdered your sons," he said. "Come, we are going to shoot him." Pastor Sōn thought for a moment. Then he said, "Don't shoot him. Release him into my care. I'll go guarantee for him." And the police chief looked at him as if he had gone mad. You might agree. And I don't intend to imply that this is the way to solve all political threats on a national or world scale. This was a purely personal, Christian response, and Pastor Sōn did exactly what he said he would do. He raised the boy in his own family to take the place of his two dead sons. And the communist became a Christian, the murderer became a son, and Pastor Sōn unwillingly found himself a national hero. They wrote his biography and called it "The Atom Bomb of Love". It was a good title. There is indeed explosive life-changing power in that kind of simple faith that takes God at his word, and accepts his love, the perfect love that casts out fear, and transforms hate, and changes death into life.

I hope these few examples from Korea will show why I say that it does matter - - it does make a vast difference when one unites his life to Christ. Not just for Koreans. Once they thought it was just for westerners. But Christ is for us all. When we turn to Him, we turn from a world controlled and paralyzed by our own fears which are all very real, but need not be shattering., For you can turn from that anxious world to a world created and sustained and governed and saved by the love of God in Jesus Christ.

God loves you! Of course it matters, not just for the world of the 19th or 20th century, but for the world of the 21st century and until Christ comes again. Yes, there is a future for Christian world mission. The missionary still carries the good news of God's covenants. Adoniram Judson, of Burma, once exclaimed, "The future is as bright as the promises of God!" But millions of people in this world of ours still do not know God's promises. Does Christ make any difference? Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) He makes all the difference in the world.

Samuel Hugh Moffett

S.H.M. Moffett, 1990-

CROSS CULTURE

A Newsletter of The Association Of Presbyterians For Cross - Cultural Mission

Number 49

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In celebration of the APCCM's 20th year, we are printing a series of articles where we look at some long term, basic issues on the "cutting edge" of mission. This article by Dr. Sam Moffett is the 3rd in the series. The Moffetts served in Korea from 1947-1981. At that time, they resigned when Sam accepted the call to become the Henry W. Luce professor of Ecumenics and Mission at Princeton Seminary. Sam was born in Korea, the son of pioneer Presbyterians missionaries. He is the author of "A History of Christianity in Asia," the second volume of which is just off the press. Sam and Eileen Moffett are much in demand as mission speakers.

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(www.ekkleisia.co.uk/contents/news_syndication/article)

100th New Wilmington Missionary Conference
July 23rd - 30th, 2005
New Wilmington, PA.

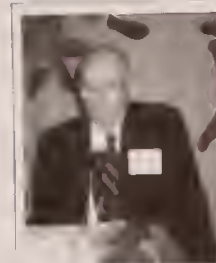
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See: www.wmcmmission.org

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APCCM Board Meeting
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Please contact Bill Jennings if you would like to be involved with the APCCM in promoting the mission of the PC(USA).
We're interested in hearing your suggestions.

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We're interested in hearing your suggestions.

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By Donald Black

This article is in response to the article by Donald Dawson in the February issue of our newsletter. Donald Black served in mission administration with the former United Presbyterian Church of North America and the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. He was the first Executive Director of the General Assembly Council of the PC(USA).

“A Mission Funding System for the 21st Century” by David Dawson stirred a double reaction. I agree with his main theme that adjustments to the present system must be made, but I react negatively to much of his development.

The “congregationalism” of the current Presbyterian Church has societal roots. The social turmoil of the sixties started a reaction against all forms of authority and people began to mistrust leadership. Church members were not content to support a mission program that had the church involved in civil disobedience, pushed for racial equality, included efforts to establish equality for women in church leadership, and willingly transferred mission power to sister churches in traditional mission fields. Efforts to increase giving such as the Advance in Mission challenge of the late sixties were met with a request for specific programs to which congregations and individual contributors could assign their funds. The General Assembly (G.A.) in 1970 emphasized the importance of a denominational effort, but also approved the possibility of designated gifts that would not be equalized. It was the supporters of the denomination’s mission programs that requested and helped design the “extra commitment opportunities” program. The program was originally designed to help congregations go beyond their support of the overall mission program. However, it appears that it is being used to replace the basic support.

When the church was experiencing the social changes of society, the phrase “creeping congregationalism” was used to describe the practice that decisions regarding the mission program were being made by congregations, and many of these decisions showed little support for the work of the more inclusive governing bodies. We were also experiencing the effect of social mobility. Career paths led families across the country, and congregations discovered that the children they had in their church school programs were not in the community as youth or adults. There were fewer and fewer church members who had roots in the congregation; indeed few knew Presbyterian Church history, structure or worship traditions. “This condition has grown as the consumer mentality has been used by families seeking a church that meets their needs.”

David accepts too readily the congregational mentality of our day. His assumption that it is only the congregation which can do mission ignores the decades of valid mission efforts carried out by the Mission Boards acting for the entire denomination and responsible to the G.A. We should not hastily abandon “the central symbol of the unity of the whole church in its collective response to mission.” (Minutes of the General Assembly, 1970, p. 869)

Another important factor in shaping our church’s life has been the availability of travel. Church members joined tours abroad and were able to visit areas they had heard missionaries describe. Two decades ago the churches in Asia were seeking help in dealing with the increasing number of tourists from Europe and America. In some cases the tourist industry was openly pandered to the sex industry. Hotels and tourists agencies were stripping schools and hospitals of English speaking personnel. Well meaning church members were distributing financial gifts on the spot with little concern for the disruption it might cause in another culture.

One problem with our “hands on mission” is the limited focus for mission decisions. There are many congregation to congregation lines of communication, but few means of coordinating what have become multiple channels of financial assistance.

Among the denomination’s response to the changes and the opportunities for new approaches has been the Mission Partnerships by congregations, presbyteries, and synods. It is one of the benefits of our “hands on” mission attitude that there are now many church members who have participated in such mission activity.

The Presbyterian Church has tried to adjust. For more than three decades the Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD) and its predecessors have been assisting synods, presbyteries, and even congregations to establish direct relations with a church in another country. They have devoted staff time and efforts to making the connections.

The changed approach is not without problems. The churches in other nations are often not prepared to give the time, nor have they the organization to make all the local arrangements for these teams. The WMD has assigned personnel whose responsibilities are “delegation coordinators” to some twenty-five related churches.

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Because of the popularity of such mission excursions sometimes funds that are badly needed for total mission causes become depleted. This approach also encourages the development of “glamour projects,” creating programs that will appeal to the donors. Congregations may choose what they would like to do instead of finding out the most important needs of the people they are trying to help. We are always caught between the need to do good and the desire to feel good. One of the benefits of the central mission program was the assurance of support for personnel whose assignments may have appeared pedantic, but whose service was greatly needed. The quiet solid worker whose public speaking skills were minimal was valued for mission service.

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We Presbyterians are a part of a denomination with a particular approach to institutional life. We may chafe under its limitations, we may disagree with its directions, and we may also find it a fellowship which provides both security and opportunity. As the General Assembly Council committee examining the mission budget moves forward, we hope that it will break some new ground while preserving the best of the past. †

AMAZING RICHES

By Rev. David V. Miller

The faith and hope that Christ gives are the amazing riches in the midst of great material lack.

Going back to Congo as an “old missionary” was a unique and wonderful experience! Everything had changed! From a structured society (whether indigenous or colonial) to total lack of structure; from lack of good communication within and without the country, to a cell phone at almost everyone’s ear!!

But greetings (and hugs) in three different languages brought me out of a daze and into reality. God’s love that had brought guidance and power to the Church through the years continues to touch, strengthen and transform lives.

The purpose of the visit in June, 2005 was to join in a celebration of fifty years of witness and growth of the Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa. Two pastors and their families (one American, one Congolese), and one Congolese teacher and his family were sent from the Presbyterian Church in the Kasai to begin the Presbyterian witness in the capital city in 1955. From those beginnings, there are now 186 parishes, 170 pastors, 38 pastor candidates and 90 students in the seminary!!

As Presbyterians do, there was and is a great emphasis on education. Today, there are 64 primary schools, 46 secondary and high schools and a partnership in a university! Add to this 10 general medical clinics and 5 maternity clinics and you can begin to see in this country of confusion and rampant HIV-AIDS, what Paul says in Romans 5: 5, “and hope does not disappear in us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.”

The great gathering to celebrate what God has done was a “blast!!” Between 2,500 and 3,000 people paraded some 2 miles and entered the church singing, dancing and waving banners. Among the speakers were the President of the All Africa Council of Churches, who was the preacher, and the Moderator of the PC(USA) who spoke with candor and insight and presented gifts.

To realize the significance of this outpouring of joy and celebration, you just had to look around and see the great poverty and suffering, the daily struggle to survive, the precarious national situation, and the breakdown of transportation and sanitation systems.

All of these I experienced firsthand as I traveled inland to the Kasai region for a four day visit. It is as though the people are holding their collective breath, waiting to see if first steps of recovery are taken or if they fall back into the “same-o, same-o”. The rich nations are beginning to respond a lot better to Africa’s needs. Sadly, at such a time the PC(USA) is cutting its support. As someone put it, “our support to the Church in Congo is the price of an SUV!”

The faith and hope that Christ gives are the amazing riches in the midst of great material lack. To me it was this that the Jubilee Anniversary revealed and celebrated. It renewed all of our spirits and filled us with praise and thanksgiving! †

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WHERE TO RETIRE? In One's Country of Service or in the U.S.?

By Frank Arnold

Although [missionaries] may have been raised in the United States they have very often put down strong roots in the country and in the culture where they have served. In such cases the question may come up as to whether to consider retiring right there among the people they have come to love and among whom they feel so comfortable.

Missionaries, like all other folk, eventually retire from active service and face the usual decisions including that of where to locate. Affecting this decision is the fact that although they may have been raised in the United States they have very often put down strong roots in the country and in the culture where they have served. In such cases the question may come up as to whether to consider retiring right there among the people they have come to love and among whom they feel so comfortable.

APCCM has received requests to look into the question of missionaries retiring in their country of service and to provide some criteria which might help those who are facing this possibility. Within the PC(USA) family we discovered ten couples or single former missionaries who have, after retirement, opted to continue to live in the country (all of them either in South America or Asia) where they had served. We sent several questions to each of them under the heading "Pros and Cons of a missionary's retiring in the land where he/she has worked." Here is a compilation of the four replies we received.

1. Why did you decide to retire in the land where you have served as a missionary?

One of the respondents replied that they had never even thought of retiring in the U.S.! Another (a single person) said the idea developed gradually, over time as he became assimilated to the culture and as his bonds with the people of the land grew stronger. For one widower, who later married a national, a deciding factor was that his children had remained in the country, married nationals and given him grandchildren. Another gave very similar reasons. For another, an important reason was that his wife is still under appointment as a PC(USA) missionary and his retirement in the land where they had worked made it possible for her to continue her work there. Other factors mentioned were a comfortable living situation and the possibility of continuing a work which they loved.

2. What were your greatest concerns/fears at the time you made the decision? Did they materialize?

Three of the respondents to this question mentioned that they had few fears or none at all. One mentioned concern over the possibility of not being able to see much of his children or grandchildren, a fear which did not materialize as one of the children moved to where they live and another may soon do so.

3. As you survey your present situation, what do you see as the greatest positive benefits of retirement living in the land where you served?

All four respondents mentioned the ability to continue doing something they loved, including being in contact with colleagues they loved. Three mentioned that they could live comfortably on their retirement income. One mentioned the special advantage that "old age is revered in Asia!"

4. Do you have any regrets? Would you make the same decision if you had to do it now?

All said unequivocally they had no regrets and that they would make the same decision if they had it to do over again. One said he thought he would be miserable if he had to live in the U.S. rather than where he is now living.

5. Would it be relatively simple for you to move back to the U.S. either now or later, should you so decide, or would that present serious complications?

Two responded that a move back to the U.S., if necessary, would be relatively simple, but that the greatest complication would be with respect to their own children and families who are now living near them. One said it

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6. What would you tell a missionary considering retirement in their country, as opposed to retiring in the U.S., as to what they should take into consideration in making their decision?

This question probably produced the most practical suggestions for those who are considering the matter of retiring in the country where they are working. Here is what was suggested for consideration, listed as received:

- Consider the educational possibilities for children or grandchildren who might remain in the land.
- Are you making a decision that your grandchildren (who didn't have a say in the matter) will regret?
- Will you need a retirement home and are there such in your country?
- If there remains the slightest doubt about retiring in your country, you should not do it.
- Examine your motivations and be alert to concrete signs of the Lord's guidance.
- What has been your relationship with national colleagues and with the national church? Have you had such high-profile work that your presence (as a retiree) in the country of service will make some folks uncomfortable?
- Where are your family members located? Are they open to traveling to visit you? Or even to moving to your region?
- What are the medical treatment options where you have served? Will you have adequate health insurance?
- Can funds be transferred from the U.S. without complication if needed?
- Can you face the separations that may be required?
- Do both spouses agree on the course of action?
- Are you willing to be cremated and/or buried in the country of service?
- Do you have real estate in your home country?
- Who will care for you if you become incapacitated?
- Are there political dangers in the country of service? Actually, this might be viewed in two ways. One might want to avoid unnecessary danger. On the other hand, one might want to live in solidarity with national colleagues who must face such dangers.
- What has been your relationship with national colleagues?

Those who responded to our questions were obviously quite happy with the decision they made to retire in their country of service, but they implied that it is not for everyone. One summarized what the others might have said as well: "We are safe and content here, in the Lord's work and hands. Amen and amen!" †

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Trained as a civil engineer, linguist, cultural anthropologist and Presbyterian minister, he describes himself as a "Christian social engineer." Working through the William Carey International University and the U.S. Center for World Mission, which he founded, he is producing a new generation of Christian message carriers, some native, ready to venture out to places with such ready-to-be-ministered-to-flocks as Muslim converts to Christianity and African Christians with heretical beliefs. Says Winter: "It's this movement, not the formal Christian church, that's growing. That's our frontier."

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MY JOURNEY AS A MISSIONARY

By Rev. Choon S. Lim

The editors of Cross Culture asked PC(USA) missionary Choon S. Lim to tell us of his "journey" as a missionary with his wife, Ynn He, RN. It is a most remarkable encounter with the world on three continents. The "journey" began in South Korea, then to Indiana University, on to Louisville Seminary, then to a Korean speaking congregation. Next they answered the call to the Island Medical Mission, serving on the good ship "Salvation" off the coast of South Korea. They then traveled all the way to Ethiopia to build a hospital, an assignment which was later changed. Following that, they answered a call to start and develop the Aboriginal College Ministry in Taiwan, where they are now serving. Note the languages involved: Korean to English, back to Korean, then to Mandarin Chinese, then one of the tribal languages of the Aboriginal people where they are beginning their third term of service. Choon Lim and Yen Hee are truly authentic "Cross Cultural" missionaries. In their own words:

As Jesus Christ's slave I try to live an obedient life. Whenever Christ calls and wants to use me, I obey His command. That is why as a missionary I went to Korea and Ethiopia and am now serving in Hualien, Taiwan. My goal is to please Christ, not others. This attitude builds up my character and now it is easy to say yes to Him.

In 1991, I was serving as an associate pastor at the Hanmee Presbyterian Church. One day I received a letter from the G.A. of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. They invited my wife, Yen Hee as a nurse and me as a director of the Island Medical Mission (IMM). They built a medical ship called "Salvation" and asked me to be in charge of it. Without hesitation, [we] accepted it even though [we] loved to serve the church. The session and members of the congregation supported [our] ministry well and I felt this was the best church I could serve. But with the invitation, I decided to leave the church because I believed that is God's call. We served the IMM for six years.

The "Salvation" ship was the only source of medical support for the people living on 500 islands off the southwestern coast of South Korea. The islands do not have hospitals and they lack basic pharmacies. These islands are isolated from the mainland. They lack adequate transportation. The standard of living is low – close to the standard of living that existed after the devastation of the Korean War. The lack of water and electricity remains a major problem. The perceived difference between the so-called rich city life and poverty sometimes leads to hopelessness and depression.

As I was about to finish my term in Korea, Rev. Sam W. Kim, Chairperson of the IMM Committee asked me to go to Ethiopia to build a hospital. He said their session of the Myung Sung Church decided to build it and allowed two million dollars for the project. Again, I believed this was God's call and went there with an elder of the church. My only condition to be a missionary in Ethiopia was to remain in PC(USA). But several months later, our mission board asked [us] not to serve there and instead asked [us] to go to Taiwan. To make a long story short, I obeyed their order

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MY JOURNEY AS A MISSIONARY

By Rev. Choon S. Lim

The editors of Cross Culture asked PC(USA) missionary Choon S. Lim to tell us of his "journey" as a missionary with his wife, Ynn Hee, RN. It is a most remarkable encounter with the world on three continents. The "journey" began in South Korea, then to Indiana University, on to Louisville Seminary, then to a Korean speaking congregation. Next they answered the call to the Island Medical Mission, serving on the good ship "Salvation" off the coast of South Korea. They then traveled all the way to Ethiopia to build a hospital, an assignment which was later changed. Following that, they answered a call to start and develop the Aboriginal College Ministry in Taiwan, where they are now serving. Note the languages involved: Korean to English, back to Korean, then to Mandarin Chinese, then one of the tribal languages of the Aboriginal people where they are beginning their third term of service. Choon Lim and Yen Hee are truly authentic "Cross Cultural" missionaries. In their own words:

As Jesus Christ's slave I try to live an obedient life. Whenever Christ calls and wants to use me, I obey His command. That is why as a missionary I went to Korea and Ethiopia and am now serving in Hualien, Taiwan. My goal is to please Christ, not others. This attitude builds up my character and now it is easy to say yes to Him.

In 1991, I was serving as an associate pastor at the Hanmee Presbyterian Church. One day I received a letter from the G.A. of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. They invited my wife, Yen Hee as a nurse and me as a director of the Island Medical Mission (IMM). They built a medical ship called "Salvation" and asked me to be in charge of it. Without hesitation, [we] accepted it even though [we] loved to serve the church. The session and members of the congregation supported [our] ministry well and I felt this was the best church I could serve. But with the invitation, I decided to leave the church because I believed that is God's call. We served the IMM for six years.

The "Salvation" ship was the only source of medical support for the people living on 500 islands off the southwestern coast of South Korea. The islands do not have hospitals and they lack basic pharmacies. These islands are isolated from the mainland. They lack adequate transportation. The standard of living is low – close to the standard of living that existed after the devastation of the Korean War. The lack of water and electricity remains a major problem. The perceived difference between the so-called rich city life and poverty sometimes leads to hopelessness and depression.

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This book is about the legacy of a man who passionately served Christ for almost forty years during China's most turbulent history. Rev. Frank A. Brown lived in the northern city of Suchowfu (modern Xuzhou), located at an important railroad crossing, an area repeatedly fought over by competing armies. His service spans the era from the last days of the Ching Dynasty, and includes the 1910 revolution which overthrew the emperor, the warlord era of chaos, the Chiang Kai-shek period, the Japanese invasion and occupation, evacuation following Pearl Harbor, the brief missionary return, and the communist take over and expulsion of all missionaries.

The author, the Rev. Dr. G. Thompson Brown (Tommy), retired PC(USA) missionary to Korea, was the second son of Frank Brown and mother Charlotte Thompson, a strong and courageous woman, who came to China as a schoolteacher. Brown tells the story from first hand experience of growing up in a missionary community. This book is the result of a family effort spanning four generations, beginning with his father's biography of his mother published in 1953. The story moves full circle when grandson, George T. Brown, Jr. tells about his special relationship with his grandfather. In 2002, he finally visited China.

"I didn't know how my communist hosts would respond to the story of Grandpa, who spent forty years in their province as a missionary. But this was my China heritage and I wanted to share it with them. I'll never forget the response from my host, one of the political leaders of the province where Grandpa devoted so many years. He said, simply, 'Welcome home.'"

Frank Brown accomplished extraordinary things during his years of traveling to the rural areas to plant and nurture churches. This turns out to be the most important part of his work, for he trained many church leaders. But during the invasion of the Japanese, he became a hero when he chose to remain with the Chinese because the presence of the missionaries would help soften the cruelty of the Japanese military. Concerned about world public opinion, the Japanese knew that missionaries could leak the truth to the broader world. "The decision of many to remain in harm's way, even though they could leave, left no doubt as to which 'side' they were on." Tommy's father wrote, "Never in 27

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The author deals forthrightly with the problems cited by his father: inadequate numbers of missionaries to evangelize such a vast population, denominational conflicts, lack of cooperation, and getting bogged down in too many insignificant details.

In 1949 when all missionaries were expelled from Communist China, it appeared that the mission had come to an end. Frank Brown would be gratified that his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren have been able to witness the phenomenal growth of the church in China in the latter part of the 20th century. The author writes, "looking back we can see that the results of the enterprise exceeded all expectations. The transforming power of the gospel did its work but followed no human timetable. It accomplished its purpose but in so doing shattered the human hopes and desires of its carriers. And in the end the missionary movement had to die in order that its mission might be accomplished. For 'we have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us.'" (2 Corinthians 4: 7)

One of the most significant outcomes of the expulsion of the Chinese missionaries was that many took what they had learned in China into Korea. From the lessons learned throughout the Chinese revolution, perhaps missionaries were more intentional in turning over the leadership to the indigenous leaders. As a result, the Korean Church has grown and impacted the entire world in staggering ways.

The book fills a gap in mission history where the records in China have been destroyed. Today Christians in China would not know about the valiant missionary efforts on their behalf to lay the foundation for the church today unless the eyewitness stories are told. This book is invaluable and tells priceless stories about these servants of God, "of whom the world was not worthy...." (Hebrews 11: 38)

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Justo Gonzalez believes that the beginning of the third millennium is a good vantage point to review the changing perspectives of both church history and world geography. The "cutting edge" of church history is now moving us into unforeseen directions shaped by the unprecedented events of September 11, 2001 which revealed the vulnerability of all humankind. For a brief and understandable account of the changing perspectives of the interaction between history, geography, politics and culture, this book would be hard to beat.

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The Association Of Presbyterians For Cross-Cultural Mission

This newsletter is published by The Association Of Presbyterians For Cross-Cultural Mission, a voluntary association of missionaries and others engaged in supporting cross-cultural mission in the PC(USA).

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Photo Credit: Bob Ellis in "Presbyterians Today", 14 September, 2004

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